

STEVE DAINES
MONTANA

SUITE SRC-1
RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-2651

United States Senate

SENATE Agriculture

Exhibit No. 3

COMMITTEES

APPROPRIATIONS

Date 2/3/15

COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND
TRANSPORTATION

Bill No. 3

ENERGY AND NATURAL
RESOURCES

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Longfellow Elementary School 4th Grade Students
c/o Debbie Nelson and Kristen Sigler
516 South Tracy Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59715

GO Longfellow!
I attended
K-4 there from
1967 → 1972.
Star

Dear 4th Grade Students of Longfellow Elementary School,

As a Longfellow Elementary alumnus, I am excited by your hard work and dedication to the task of establishing Scobey Soil as the official state soil of Montana. Since 2015 is the International Year of the Soil, this is a great time to honor Montana's soil resources.

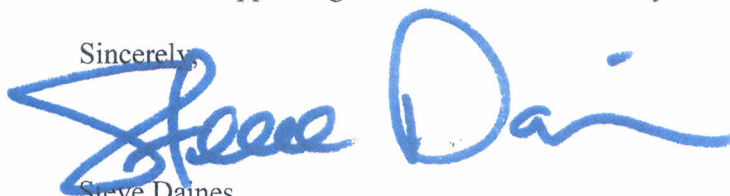
Students, just like you, have been researching and promoting state symbols in Montana for over 100 years and have made recommendations that led to the designation of our state tree (the Ponderosa Pine), our state mammal (the Grizzly Bear), and our state fossil (the Maisaura).

Since Scobey soil is unique to this state, it has an important place in Montana's history as well as a vital role in the many wheat farming communities in the Golden Triangle. I even believe my great-great-grandmother, Karine Dyrud, farmed Scobey Soils near Conrad on the Hi-Line in the late 1800s.

I would like to thank your teachers, Debbie Nelson and Kristen Sigler, for their hard work, commitment, and dedication to you, their students, and to this project. Their efforts have a significant impact on this task and mean a great deal to the community.

Congratulations to each of you on your hard work and involvement to this project. I hope it serves as inspiration for future projects throughout your time as students and beyond. I know you have inspired me and I will be sure to contact my State Representative, Matthew Monforton, and ask him to support legislation to establish Scobey Soil as the official State Soil of Montana.

Sincerely,



Steve Daines
U.S. Senator

SENATE AGRICULTURE

Exhibit No. 3

Date 2/3/15

Bill No. SB 176

SENATE AGRICULTURE

Exhibit No. _____

Date _____

Bill No. _____

Dear Longfellow School forth graders,

This is to support your efforts to designate Scobey soil series as Montana's official state soil.

Anything we can do to increase the awareness and importance of soil information is a plus. Soil information is published in Soil Surveys that are available for nearly all counties/areas in the State of Montana and the United States. This information tells us the potential productivity of a soil (i.e. crops, range or timber) as well as the better places to build our homes, roads, recreational areas, etc. It also shows us where not to try to grow these crops (i.e. salty/saline areas or steep areas) and where not to build or buy our homes (i.e. flood plains).

We use soil information in the Powder River County Soil Survey on our family ranch in eastern Montana each spring to determine the amount of stored water, which added to projected rainfall in May and June is used to calculate projected range production, by soil map units, which translates to animal units and/or stocking rates for the year. Production can range from 300 pounds/acre during a series of dry years to 1500 pounds/acre during a series of wet years on the same soil unit. That information translates to a big difference in animal stocking rates for the year.

Thank you for initiating and supporting this important effort to designate Scobey as Montana's state soil.

Sincerely, Dr. Gordon L. Decker

6700 Springhill Road
Belgrade, MT 59714
(406) 586 3428
gdecker200@gmail.com

Retired State Soil Scientist for Montana
Eastern Montana Rancher



Memorandum

January 28, 2015

To: Kristin Sigler, Debbie Nelson and Students
Longfellow School

Copy: Senator Taylor Brown
Montana Senate

J. P. Pomnichowski
Montana House

From: Bill Schafer
Schafer Limited, Bozeman, Montana

Re: Montana Sate Soil

I am writing to support your efforts to ask the Montana Legislature designate the Scobey Clay Loam as Montana's State Soil. I am a soil scientist and have lived and worked in Montana for over 35 years. After earning a Ph.D. in Soil Science at Montana State, I worked for five years as a Soil Scientist with the Montana Extension Service, helping farmers and ranchers across Montana with soil and water management decisions. In 1985, I formed a company to assist the mining and petroleum industries to fulfill their obligations to preserve and protect soil and water resources. Through the business that I formed, I have had the opportunity to work on mining projects all over the world during the last 35 years.

A State Soil represents many things. A soil echoes the local climate, geology, and natural plant communities that it supports. In the case of the Scobey Clay Loam, it reflects the glaciers that once covered northeastern Montana over 10,000 years ago, the short-grass prairie that supported vast herds of bison, and the modest rainfall and cold winters of its namesake town, Scobey. By designating a State Soil, Montana also celebrates its agricultural heritage and affirms a commitment to soil conservation.

I heartily endorse the legislation that would designate Scobey Clay Loam as our State Soil.

William M. Schafer

Dear Senator or Representative,

Please support SB 176: Designating the Scobey soil series as Montana's official state soil.

I am a native Montanan and registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) promoting healthy living here in the "Treasure State". I am very happy to see efforts that would recognize one of our most valuable "down-to-earth" resources, Scobey soil, as an official state symbol. No doubt our food production and water supply is only as healthy as the source it comes from namely our land resources...our soil. Supporting this bill is good for the health of all Montanans!

It is time for cooperation in the Montana legislature to recognize the unique qualities of Scobey soils and all that Montana produces and sells from them. Thank you for your support. Montana will join 21 other states in designating a state soil and helping citizens recognize the important role soil plays in our economy, environment, and our public health.

Sincerely,

Barbara Benson, MS, RDN

Bozeman, MT

406-599-4882

bnbenson@gmail.com

COMMITTEES:

APPROPRIATIONS
BANKING
INDIAN AFFAIRS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

United States Senate

January 12, 2015

Debbie Nelson and Kristin Sigler
Longfellow Elementary School
516 South Tracy
Bozeman, MT 59715

Dear Ms. Nelson, Ms. Sigler and students,

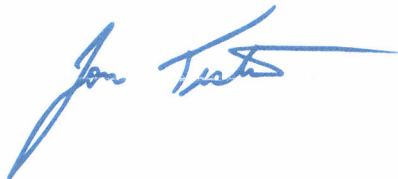
Congratulations and thank you for your hard work researching and concluding that the Scobey Soil Series should be declared the state's official state soil. I write in full support of the declaration.

Montana has a state bird, animal and flower. As a farmer, I think it's high time that Montana's rich soil is recognized, too.

Proposing a bill to the legislature and following it through the legislative process is an exciting and valuable experience. I am very proud of you for taking this on and seeing it through.

Good luck on your legislation. Please let me know if I can be of any additional assistance.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester
United States Senator

CC: Senator JP Pomnichowski
Montana Senate
P O Box 200500
Helena, MT 59620-0550

Harold Hunter

1755 Moffit Gulch Road

Bozeman, MT 59715

Phone: 406-587-1628

Fax: 406-587-1628

Email: HHunter355@aol.com

January 30, 2015

To: Fourth Grade Students Longfellow Elementary

Hi! I want you to know I am intimately familiar with the soil you are proposing as the state soil, Scobey. I described it, mapped it and developed interpretations as to its suitability for many different uses while working as a soil scientist on the Glacier County Soil Survey. It was one of my favorite soils in that it contained few hard rocks. Therefore, it was easy to dig. As you know, Scobey has more important characteristics, among them the suitability for growing grass.

Scobey is an important rangeland soil. It is grouped with similar soils into what is called a silty range site which is the Cadillac of range sites. The soil is very productive as rangeland and bluebunch wheatgrass is a very important grass that grows on this soil. Bluebunch wheatgrass was selected as the state grass. So, it seems to me that since the state grass grows on the important soil you have selected, it should be named the state soil.

Hal

SB-176 Comment

JW & Lori Westman Family
PO Box 203
Park City, MT 59063-0203

Dear Senator Brown & Committee Members:

The young Blackfeet hunter, his bow at the ready sits atop his anxious horse, waiting for precisely the right moment to rush the herd of bison with his hunting companions. Success here will help carry his village through the long, cold winter months with nourishing pemmican.

The young farmer and his wife, not long off the ship from Norway, made their way to a new life, to begin farming. After much hard work and worry they look at their newly sprouted wheat plants-hoping the crop will be a good one-this is what will carry them through the long, cold winter. The parallel here, both were ultimately depending on the soil to help nourish them.

The above description gives a brief glimpse into our backgrounds, very proud of them. The examples above are testimony to the value of our precious soil here in Montana. A soil that should; at least be recognized for what it is, nothing more than recognition-neither Republican nor Democrat. **Scobey Soil**, this soil has given so much life to those depending on it throughout time.

Please come together and approve this bill, a bill that many, especially those bright fourth graders at Longfellow Elementary School in Bozeman have worked very hard at. The Westman Family from Park City, MT hopes this committee passes this piece of legislation. **We approve of SB-176**, and want this comment added to the official record. Thanks a bunch for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

JW, Lori, Megan & Dakota Westman
Park City, MT



January 23, 2015

Senate Ag Committee

Montana Legislature

Helena, MT 59601

Dear Committee,

I am writing this letter **in support** of the bill entitled, "An Act Designating The Scobey Soil Series As Montana's Official State Soil".

As a farmer in this great State, I am pleased to learn of the effort to name a State Soil. After all, it is the soil of this land that sustains us, and the importance of that one resource should not be under-valued. We, stewards, take great care to ensure that the soils of our farms are as productive as possible, and therefore; we undertake this responsibility with dignity and assurance.

The Scobey soil series is well suited for this honor, as it is found in the State's most productive regions, and is suitable for a diverse set of crops.

Please move forward with approving this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dean Folkvord". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dean Folkvord, Founder & CEO

Students propose state soil

Elementary students across Montana campaign to name an official state soil



Bozeman's Longfellow Elementary leads effort to recognize Montana agriculture and environment.

Fourth graders at Longfellow Elementary have launched a statewide effort to designate an official state soil, highlighting the importance of agriculture and the environment to the Treasure State.

Students, working with soil scientists, have nominated northern Montana's Scobey soil as the state's official soil.

Agriculture is integral to Montana's economy, bringing in \$4.7 billion in revenue last year. Legislatures in 21 other states have recognized the important role soil plays in their economy and the environment - but not Montana, one of the few states with a rich agricultural tradition to not have a state soil.

The Scobey soil, with roots in the ice age, is unique to the state and excellent for growing Montana's famous hard red winter wheat, a crop with a global reputation for high quality.

State symbols recognize natural treasures. Our soil is an important resource for Montana. Students believe it deserves recognition.

Contact Longfellow School:

Debbie Nelson, Kristin Sigler – teachers
406-522-6150
Debbie.Nelson@bsd7.org
Kristin.Sigler@bsd7.org
MontanaSoil.weebly.com



Students are learning about the important role soils play in Montana's agricultural and environmental heritage



Dr. Tony Hartshorn of Montana State University helps Longfellow students become soil science experts.



Why Scobey Soil?

The Scobey soil is unique to Montana and very good for growing wheat.

Scobey is found where ice sheets once were. About 12,000 years ago, glaciers carrying silt from Canada scraped up Montana's underlying shale. The resulting fine-textured soil holds moisture extremely well. Grasslands growing for thousands of years created a rich topsoil.

Today, Montana's wheat crop's is worth almost \$1.6 billion annually; about 75 percent gets exported to Asia.

Students have history with symbols

In 1908 school children launched a state tree campaign, voting among the fir, larch, cottonwood and pine. Ponderosa Pine won handily, but not until 1949 did the Montana Legislature make it official.

In 1982 school children again voted, this time to make the Grizzly Bear the state mammal. In 1985, Livingston Middle School led the effort to name a state fossil, the Maisaura.



Interesting soil facts

1. It can take 500 years to make one inch of topsoil.
2. A tablespoon of soil has more living organisms than there are people on Earth right now!
3. As earthworms plow through soil they eat some of it, and their poop - called castings - improves soil health.
4. The United States has 70,000 different kinds of soil.

For more information

Contact the students' state soil advisors

Sen. JP Pomnichowski (bill sponsor):
pomnicho@montanadsl.net; (406) 587-7846

MSU Emeritus Prof. Jerry Nielsen:
nielsenmontana@aol.com; (406) 587-8643

Sources for facts and figures on this sheet:

Montana 2013 Agricultural Statistics, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks

